

Purpose of Conference

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Let me say a few words about the conference. As you know, Terry Hawkins, Rajan Gupta, and I are the co-sponsors; although I must say, the bulk of the work has been done by Rajan and we really thank him for getting you all together here today. I would like to thank our visitors for coming to Los Alamos and joining us on this topic. I would also like to thank all of you from the laboratory who are here.

Our laboratory is accustomed to working on big problems. We started in 1943, not only working on a big problem, but an urgent problem. As you can see, it has been many decades and that problem has hung around the entire time. The thing we do well is bring science and technology to bear on problems that are big, urgent, and essentially, do not go away. That is the essence of what we face with terrorism as well. It is an on-going problem and an issue of measures and countermeasures. The smarter we get as a country, the smarter the terrorists get, so this constant back and forth is needed to ensure that we bring the best to bear. Of course, what we can do is bring science and technology to bear, but that cannot be done in a vacuum. That is the reason you will see here this week, speakers who talk about the broad context of terrorism, because in the end, we must understand the roots of terrorism as well as everything else associated with it.

As those of you from the laboratory well know, we tend to get buried in our everyday lives of paperwork and often lose sight of the fact that we need to think about the larger and more strategic problems in the world. Here again is where I have to give Rajan Gupta credit. A couple of years ago, he and a number of colleagues said, “You know, this does not make sense. We should be thinking about what is important to the world. How can a laboratory, such as ours, help in looking at the big picture problems?” Going back to his native India and seeing the problems facing them today with health care, poverty, and population explosion particularly impacted him. He started sponsoring a series of seminars on international security. Of course, it also contained the things that we are normally associated with, i.e., nuclear weapons. However, as he indicated, a workshop on terrorism was in the planning stages before September 11. In looking at the security aspects of the world we are living in, it was clearly one of the areas identified as being critical and that would surely be important.

On September 11, I was actually in Dijon, France. That was an interesting experience. I like to say often that September 11 and a few days afterwards were a time of empathy for the United States. The way that I like to demonstrate that is by saying that even the French had empathy for the Americans at that time. It was true. It was genuine. Rajan and I talked afterwards. One of the things we tried to do with this workshop is raise the awareness of people about terrorism. Rajan has continued to be very persistent and has

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now set up a series of encounters where we want to encourage the people of the laboratory to think big, think strategically, think about how skills can be applied in science and technology, and how those things can be maneuvered in the direction of helping solve these important problems.

Thus, this is a first of a series, and obviously, very timely and important. I welcome you and look forward to interacting with you during the course of the week.

Siegfried S. Hecker

Currently a Senior Fellow at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Dr. Hecker was Director of Los Alamos National Laboratory from 1986-1997. He joined the Laboratory as technical staff member of the Physical Metallurgy Group in 1973, following a postdoctoral assignment there in 1968-1970 and a summer graduate student assignment in 1965. He served as Chairman of the Center for Materials Science and Division Leader of the Materials Science and Technology Division before becoming Director. From 1970 to 1973 he was a senior research metallurgist with the General Motors Research Laboratories. Dr. Hecker received his B.S. in metallurgy in 1965 and M.S. in metallurgy in 1967 from Case Institute of Technology and his Ph.D. in metallurgy in 1968 from Case Western Reserve University.

In addition to his current research activities, Dr. Hecker has been actively engaged in cooperative threat reduction efforts with the Russian nuclear complex and in counter terrorism efforts with the Russian Academy of Sciences. He serves on the Council of the National Academy of Engineering, is chair of the Joint U.S./Russian Academies Committee on Counterterrorism Challenges in Russia and the United States, and serves on the National Academies Nonproliferation Committee. He has also served as scientific advisor to the Nuclear Threat Initiative. Dr. Hecker is a member of ASM International and TMS, the Minerals/Metals/Materials Society, having served both in numerous local and national positions, and a member of the Materials Research Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Pacific Council. Dr. Hecker served on the Board of Regents for the University of New Mexico. He has served as Honorary Chairman, Los Alamos Area United Way Campaign (1989); as Board member, Carrie Tingley Hospital, Albuquerque, New Mexico; and as member and President of the Los Alamos Ski Club.